

FOR INFORMATION

NSDIP Advisory Committee Annual Meeting 2020

Agenda Item 2.1

Last updated: **3 September 2020**

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Northern Territory NSDIP Coordinator Report 2019-20

RECOMMENDATION

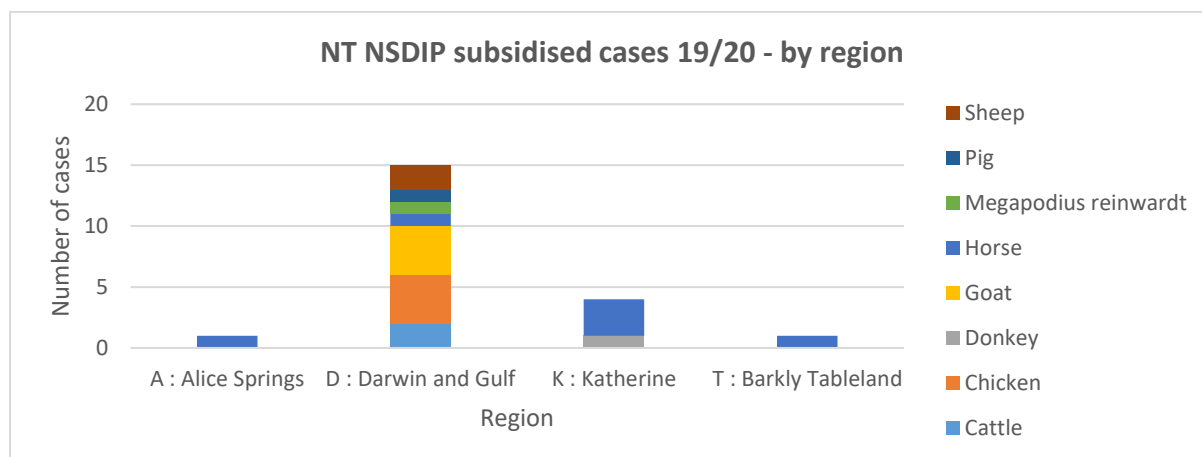
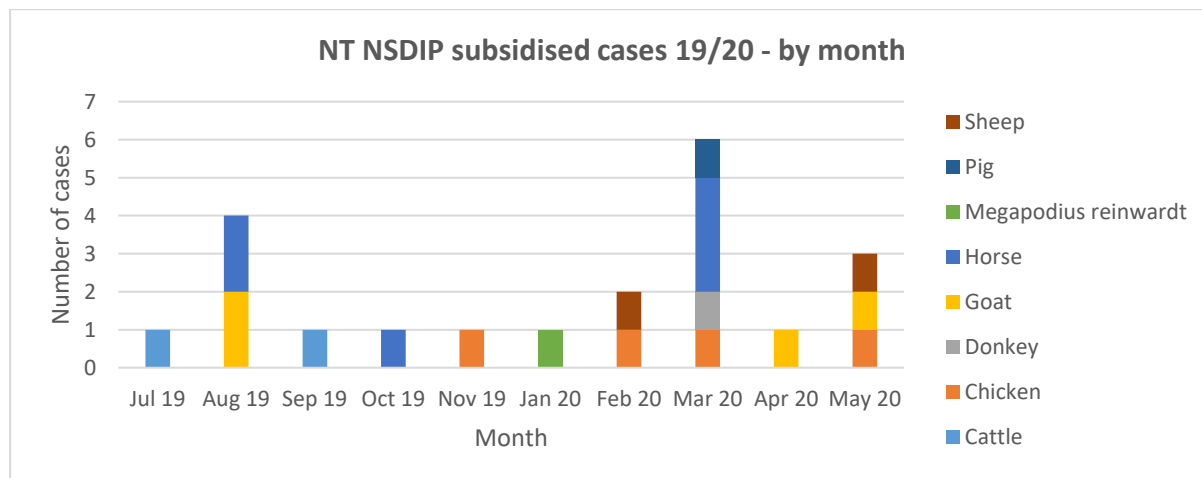
1. That the NSDIP Advisory Committee NOTE the report on activities undertaken by the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Resources (DPIR) during the financial year 2019-20.

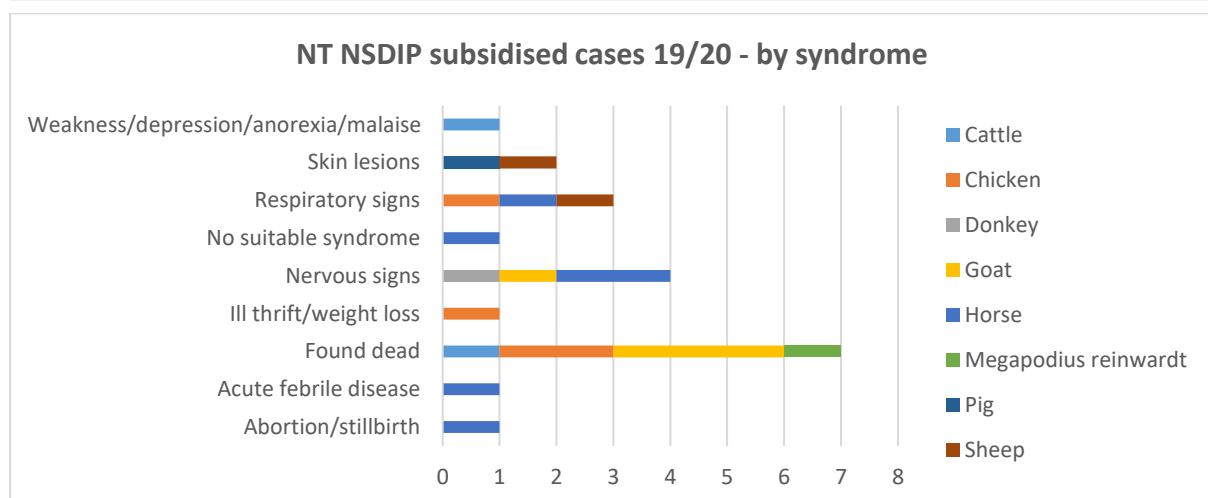
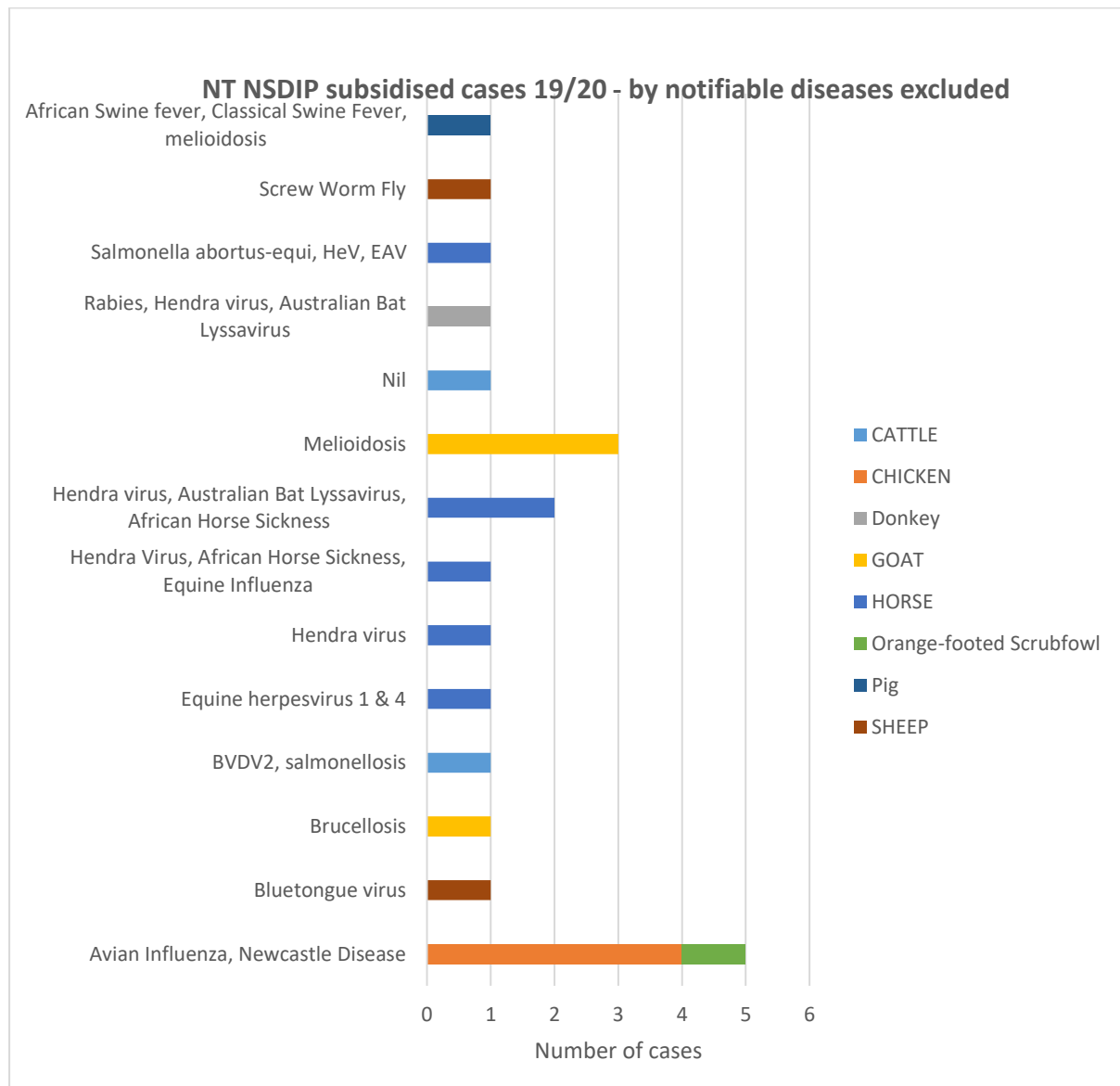
BACKGROUND

This report describes the activities undertaken by the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Resources (DPIR) during the financial year 2019-20 against national commitments as documented in the National Significant Disease Investigation Program Business Plan July 2019 – June 2022.

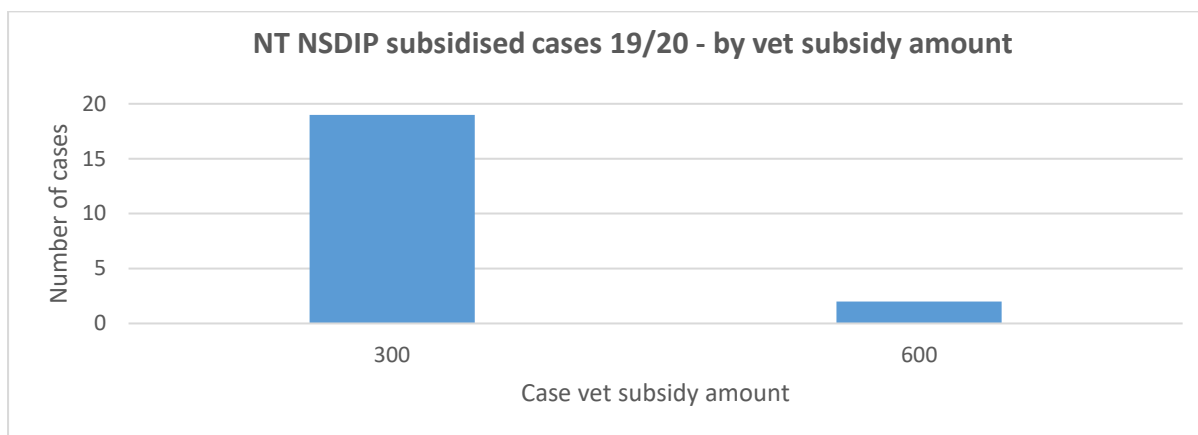
DISCUSSION

2. 21 disease investigation cases were subsidised in 2019/20; 3 more than in 19/20 and 9 more than in 17/18. All but one case included laboratory exclusion of one or more notifiable diseases.





3. 19 cases received a subsidy of \$300. For 2 cases which required multiple sampling visits and full field post-mortems, a \$600 subsidy was paid.



4. The total cost of laboratory testing for subsidised cases was \$14,500.70.
5. NT NSDIP training did not occur in 19/20. The Committee accepted a training proposal in September 2020, and two NT private vets were selected to participate in the Victorian Animal Disease Investigation Course in April 2020, however, the training was cancelled due to the COVID pandemic. The budget for this training (\$3,477) was diverted to disease investigation subsidies. It is proposed that a local disease investigation training course is held in early 2021; a proposal for this training will be provided to the Committee in due course.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6. The NT budget for 19/20 was \$17,255. A total of \$16,150.40 was spent, leaving \$1,104.60 unspent. A breakdown of expenditure is below.

Expenditure	\$
Vet subsidies	6900
Lab claim	9250.40
Training	0
Total spent	16150.40

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

7. Three NSDIP-related articles were published in the NT Veterinary Board newsletter in 19/20. This newsletter is sent directly to all primary and secondary registered vets in the Northern Territory.
8. NT NSDIP information is available at <https://dpir.nt.gov.au/boards-and-committees/veterinary-board-of-the-NT/information-for-veterinarians>

VET NEWS

Cox-Witton said WHA would like to add more clinics to the network, resources permitting.

"We recognize that there's a whole other tier of clinics out there where wildlife isn't a significant part of their work but they still see the occasional wildlife case," she said. "That's something that we'd like to look at in the future."

REPORT FROM DR MADELINE KELSO ON NSDIP TRAINING COURSE

The National Significant Disease Investigation Program (NSDIP)

The training course was conducted in Bendigo and was a nice cool, dry change in weather from the hot, humid Northern Territory wet season. Day one was a theory day and covered practically useful information for an animal disease investigation. There was a mix of government and private veterinarians in the room and one of the interesting topics covered was the role in a disease investigation of both categories of veterinarians.



We discussed the strengths and weaknesses of veterinarians in both fields and then discussed how we could collaborate with each other in a disease investigation. As a veterinarian on the frontline, I found day one a useful refresher in deciding when to call the government veterinarian for further assistance when working in the field. I particularly enjoyed the practical epidemiology rules of thumbs to use in a disease investigation.

Day two was a practical session involving a systematic approach to post mortem examinations. This was conducted on sheep, with the course instructors taking the group through a step by step practical tutorial on post mortem examinations, specifically targeting the exact specimen samples that are required and the correct procedure for collecting. We also covered knife sharpening skills and methods of euthanasia for a variety of different animals. Overall, I found the animal disease investigation course very informative and would recommend to other veterinarians as a refresher in this important aspect of our professions.

CREATIVE METHODS TO ATTRACT VETERINARIANS TO RURAL AREAS

Although many veterinary clinics around the country struggle to secure veterinarians, the task is more challenging if your clinic is in a rural area. New graduate veterinarians are often up to the challenge of 'heading out bush', however it can be difficult to retain them for more than a couple of years. Attracting experienced veterinarians to rural areas is even more difficult.

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VET NEWS

VETERINARY BOARD NUMBERS

The Veterinary Board has as at 31 October 324 registered veterinarians. 139 Primary registered veterinarians, 1 NT Primary Specialist veterinarian and 184 Secondary veterinarians.

CLOSURE OF OFFICE OVER CHRISTMAS PERIOD

Please note that the Veterinary Board office will close for the Christmas period from 8.00am 18 December 2019 and re-open at 8.00am 6 January 2020. All registration renewals and new registrations that are forwarded to the Board during this period will be processed when the office reopens. Therefore veterinarians renewing their registration during the office closure period need not worry as your renewal certificate will be completed on the Registrar's return on 6 January 2020.

HENDRA VIRUS

Local Land Services Hunter Region noted confirmation of Hendra virus infection by the State Veterinary Laboratory at Menangle 12 June 2019 in an unvaccinated mare on a property near Scone. In NSW to date there have been 22 horse deaths as a result of Hendra virus and whilst there have been no human fatalities from Hendra virus in NSW the disease presents significant work health and safety, public health and biosecurity risks.

Hendra virus infection is a notifiable disease in the Northern Territory.

Northern Territory Veterinarians are strongly advised to regularly review their Hendra virus work health and safety responsibilities.

NATIONAL SIGNIFICANT DISEASE INVESTIGATION PROGRAM (NSDIP)

Have you seen an unusual wildlife case that you'd like to investigate further? NSDIP Program funds are available for your veterinary investigation (usually around \$200 - \$350 but can be more for a large event) as well as to cover the cost of laboratory testing. To give you an idea of the types of cases to look out for, [here's](#) an example of some of the events we funded.

- Neurological signs in a variety species: black flying-fox, carpet python, tawny frogmouths, rainbow lorikeet, ravens, crested pigeon
- Diarrhoea and sudden death of ringtail possums in care
- Brushtail possums with renal changes and dermatitis
- Mortality and ocular lesions in pademelons
- Ill-thrift in koalas
- Epistaxis in western grey kangaroos
- Ear lesions in swamp wallabies
- Bar-shouldered doves with feather changes and diarrhoea

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NT Vet Board newsletter July 2019

NT Vet Board newsletter November 2019

VET NEWS

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NATIONAL SIGNIFICANT DISEASE INVESTIGATION PROGRAM (NSDIP) - WILDLIFE REMINDER

Have you seen an unusual wildlife case that you'd like to investigate further? The National Significant Disease Investigation Program provides funds for veterinary investigation (usually around \$200 - \$350 but can be more for a large event) as well as to cover the cost of laboratory testing. Cases which have been eligible for funding include:

- Neurological signs in a variety species: black flying-fox, carpet python, tawny frogmouths, rainbow lorikeet, ravens, crested pigeon
- Diarrhoea and sudden death of ringtail possums in care
- Brushtail possums with renal changes and dermatitis
- Mortality and ocular lesions in pademelons
- Ill-thrift in koalas
- Epistaxis in western grey kangaroos
- Ear lesions in swamp wallabies
- Bar-shouldered doves with feather changes and diarrhoea

It's easy to apply, you just need to email cathy.shilton@nt.gov.au with sufficient information for whether the case meets the criteria for NSDIP funding. This should include a brief history, why the event is unusual/significant, what has been done so far, and what further investigation is planned. Please feel free to get in touch if you'd like to talk through some cases and what might qualify.

INFORMATION FOR VETERINARIANS - ANIMAL WELFARE

Cruelty cases

Veterinarians from time to time may be faced with cases where an animal has suffered harm. Cases can range from overt cruelty, e.g. where an animal has been deliberately or maliciously injured, to cases where an animal may be suffering through lack of or inadequate treatment provided by the animal's owner, e.g. where an owner has failed to treat or euthanise an animal with a serious injury, such as a broken leg, or chooses for some reason not to proceed with treatment.

As a veterinarian, you are responsible for giving the owner information about the animal welfare consequences of such decisions. If an animal suffers because of a decision (or lack of

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NT Vet Board Newsletter May 2020

NEXT STEPS/ACTIONS

9. None required.

FEEDBACK

- 10.

Q1 My organisation's needs and expectations of the NSDIP are being met.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Please explain your answer, including any suggested changes: The data collection and financial processes are adequate.				

Q2 The National Significant Disease Investigation Program has provided opportunities to private veterinarians for gaining the necessary knowledge and skills to investigate and report on disease events.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Please explain your answer, including any suggested changes: NA for 2020				

Q3 The National Significant Disease Investigation Program has helped to improve the level of notifiable disease investigations through effective engagement with private veterinarians and assisting in funding investigations that may not have progressed otherwise.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Please explain your answer, including any suggested changes: Engagement with private veterinarians regarding NSDIP has improved. Private vets report it is a good incentive. Notifiable disease investigation in the NT is improving, however this may be due to the targeted Northern Australian Biosecurity Surveillance project subsidies and training for northern Australian cattle veterinarians. Some vets report being confused as to why significant diseases in small animals are not included within the scope of the program, and suggest that this would facilitate more notifiable disease exclusions in these species.				

Q4 Animal Health Australia is managing the National Significant Disease Investigation Program effectively/satisfactorily.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Please explain your answer, including any suggested changes:				